

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 20

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Ross Alderman,
Nashville's Public Defender.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Ross Alderman, who clearly demonstrated his love for justice, by both word and deed, during his twenty years in the Nashville Public Defender's office; and

WHEREAS, during his thirty-two years of practicing law, Mr. Alderman focused primarily on criminal law, and he exhibited a constant devotion to the defense of the poor, serving as an assistant U.S. attorney and an assistant federal public defender before coming to the Nashville Public Defender's office; and

WHEREAS, although he was first elected Nashville's Public Defender in 1999, he spent another eleven years with the office in various capacities before that time; and

WHEREAS, as Public Defender, Mr. Alderman devoted his life to ensuring that every person accused of committing a crime received a competent defense, thus ensuring the viability of one of the central tenets of the American criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Alderman was renowned among his colleagues and employees for his work ethic, integrity, and generosity in mentoring young lawyers, and he has left behind an impressive legacy for present and future public defenders to build upon; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Alderman transformed the Nashville Public Defender's office into a progressive agency through several innovative programs and services, including starting a program to help clients with mental health and substance abuse problems (Forensic Aftercare Team), increasing the number of Spanish-speaking attorneys, improving services to children involved in neglect cases through the guardian ad litem program, and establishing a unit to represent juveniles transferred to the adult criminal system; and

WHEREAS, former Nashville mayor Bill Purcell aptly described Mr. Alderman as "the model for the public defender," and present Mayor Karl Dean praised him as being "intelligent, fearless, and highly ethical;" and

WHEREAS, on a personal level, Ross Alderman possessed a dry wit and a kind heart, and his friends often tried to emulate him out of deep admiration, trying to match his knowledge of and love for the written word or showing great courtesy to and patience for their loved ones, just as he did; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Alderman was a graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Law, where he met the love of his life and wife of twenty-nine years, the Honorable Patricia Cottrell, who sits on the Tennessee Court of Appeals; and

WHEREAS, in addition to Judge Cottrell, Mr. Alderman is survived by their son and daughter-in-law, Noah and Dawn Alderman; his parents, Eugene and Betty Alderman; his sister and brother-in-law, Dr. Sarah and Tim Polk; his brother and sister-in-law, Roy and Mary Alderman; his grandchildren, Cassandra and Alanna; his mother-in-law, Josephine Craig; and his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Herbert and Gay Evans, Roberta and Jim Stricker, and Linda and Ed Howes; and

WHEREAS, men of Ross Alderman's integrity and compassion do not often walk among us, and it is thus fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we celebrate the life and honor the memory of Ross Alderman, reflecting fondly upon his lifelong commitment to justice for all people and his meritorious service as Nashville's Public Defender.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Alderman.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.